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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Promotion and protection of human rights

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 24 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the following urgent matter.

The continuing aggression by the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan has led to the temporary occupation of a significant part of my country's territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the seven adjacent districts and some exclaves. The war has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, ruined cities, towns and villages in Azerbaijan and resulted in the forcible expulsion of more than 1 million Azerbaijanis from their homes and properties.

The international community has consistently deplored, in the strongest terms, the use of military force against Azerbaijan and the resulting occupation of its territories, as reflected in Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), thus rejecting any actions violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and refusing to recognize as legitimate the situation created through such actions.

However, the impunity still enjoyed by the perpetrators of the crimes committed in the course of the aggression contributes to Yerevan's growing sense of permissiveness. As a result, despite the ongoing political process towards the earliest settlement of the conflict, flagrant violations by Armenia of international humanitarian law and international human rights law continue.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Armenia has extensively practised the taking and holding of hostages and mistreatment and summary execution of prisoners of war and other captives. Thus, at the beginning of July 2018, 3,875 citizens of Azerbaijan were registered as missing as a result of the conflict, including 707 civilians. Among

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the civilians, 67 are children, 265 are women and 324 are elderly persons. It has been established that 871 of the 3,875 missing persons were taken as either prisoners of war or hostages, including 267 civilians, of whom 29 are children, 98 are women and 112 are elderly persons.

A clear list of the missing citizens of Azerbaijan has been submitted to Armenia through the International Committee of the Red Cross and is being regularly updated. However, Armenia has failed to account either properly or at all for the missing persons within its control and to conduct a prompt and effective investigation into the arguable claims that such persons have been taken into its custody and have not been seen since.

On 11 July 2014, the Armenian armed forces brutally killed an Azerbaijani civilian, Hassan Hassanov, and captured Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev, who were attempting to visit the graves of their parents in the occupied Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan. The Armenian side not only did not release these civilians but also fabricated charges against them and unlawfully sentenced Mr. Asgarov to life imprisonment and Mr. Guliyev to 22 years in jail, while the body of Mr. Hassanov was returned to Azerbaijan, with the facilitation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, after almost three months, on 2 October 2014.

The images of Mr. Asgarov and Mr. Guliyev before and after their capture, which the Armenian side made available to the public to exert psychological pressure on their families and relatives, clearly demonstrate that they were subjected to torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment.

Illegitimately depriving Mr. Asgarov and Mr. Guliyev of liberty and keeping them in captivity despite the appeals of the international community are yet further proof of contempt for human rights, intolerance and hatred at the core of Armenia's policy of aggression, occupation and ethnic cleansing.

The Republic of Azerbaijan expects that the United Nations, including its relevant human rights mechanisms and procedures, will not remain indifferent to the fate of Mr. Asgarov and Mr. Guliyev, who are suffering from serious health problems, and will spare no effort to ensure their immediate and unconditional release and reunification with their families.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35, 40 and 72, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative